Dedham Apr. 26. 1840.

My Dear Friend:

When I was a little boy at school, - where after the straitest sect of our religion I was brought up at Andover - there was a tough little amphibious tritonlike minnow from Marblehead, hight Nat. Hooper. One day the Postmaster, perhaps foreboding the glories of these latter days when Postmasters are restored to their natural rights of inspecting the epistles which pass through their hands & of suppressing or returning them at their pleasure, sent a suspicious looking scrap of paper most enigmatically folded & hieroglyphically superscribed to the master on suspicion that the same was intended as an imposition upon the person addressed. The worthy pedagogue, by virtue of his plenary authority, opened it & found it to contain substantially the following laconic proposition; - "Dear Father: I write this that you may write letters." This early blossoming of original sin was too rank not to require an instant interposition of the delegated paternal power to prevent its ripening into fruit meet for destruction. Accordingly the culprit was paraded before the school, & the master, after having administered what Peter Simple would call a good wigging, proceeded with the awful ferula of his office to instil the duty of honouring his father & his mother into his obdurate heart by the same avenue at which Bob Acres' courage oozed out - to wit, at the palms of his hands. I know not what has become of this youthful sinner but hope that he has endured the buffettings of this rough world with as much philosophy & indifference as he underwent this seasonable chastening in his tender years. The recollection of this passage of my school-boy history returned freshly to my mind when I thought of breaking off a small piece of the Sabbath for the purpose of writing to you upon it. I certainly do not propose to be as Spartan in my communications as was my friend of other days; - though peradventure you may wish I were - for like him "I write this" not because I have aught to say, but "that you may write letters." When I wrote the last sentence, as from the beginning of my recital of this incident, I thought only of its comical character, but on second thoughts it seems to me to ~~have been~~ be not

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entirely a laughing matter. The~~x~~ effusion of this poor boy for which he was scourged by a stupid schoolmaster was doubtless no intentional disrespect towards his father— but merely the yearning of his poor homesick heart for some tidings of his home & for the sympathies & charities he ~~had lost~~ missed, without knowing what was the matter with him, simply & to my mind not unaffectingly expressed. He had something to say & he said it— & Sevigné or Horace Walpole could have done no more. I, too, miss the society & sympathy of my other home in West street, & I feel that I cannot get along without some communication with it. The society of yourself, your husband & sisters, which I have there enjoyed has become too necessary to ~~me~~ to be given up without some attempt ~~[illegible]~~ on my part to continue to enjoy it at least at second hand. I literally regret nothing else that I have left behind me in Boston but the true society which I have enjoyed at your house— the society of educated & accomplished minds informed & elevated by devotion to great & sublime principles. I have seen much of society in various parts of the country & have been familiar with fashionable, literary & religious circles but I never found what satisfied my heart till I became intimate with your family & the circle of friends which gather around it— for I never before found genius & talent without vanity & the thirst for display, literature without a slight tinge of pedantry or ~~[illegible]~~ strong, pervading religious feeling without some admixture of cant. I lack, too, the fresh hearing of the private history, so to speak, of the great movements which are to ~~make~~ fill up the history of this Age— though the Age knows it not. I want to hear fresh & fresh the daily occurrences & even the flying rumors, which throw any light upon the march of events ~~[illegible]~~ as they pass in grand procession before our opened eyes, assuming under the guidance of eternal principles of divine truth, an awful port & solemn bearing unapproached in the annals of mankind— excepting when Christianity was ~~[illegible] forth from~~ first aroused in the recesses of the human soul by Jesus Christ & sent forth conquering & to conquer until it have put all Oppression & tyranny & sin under its feet. Is it not an elevating thought— that, ~~[illegible]~~ in the midst of a sensual & faithless generation, we are accomplishing the work for which our segment of Time was appointed? And this too, with no by-ends, no selfish objects in view— without the possibility of pandering to any of our lower propensities or appetites by our complete success. Lucretius says ~~that~~ there is no greater pleasure than to stand on the shore, &, seeing the ships that go down upon the waters tossed & driven to & fro by ~~the~~ storms, to enjoy the exquisite sense of personal security. It is not with the selfish joy of the old Epicurean that we feel that we have planted our feet upon the eternal Rock & look out upon the Ocean stream of human affairs & see myriads of ~~immortal~~ noble barks, freighted with immortal hearts, buffetted about by the tempests of ambition, covetousness, pride & sensuality, striving in vain to find a haven of rest & multitudes foundering before our eyes — for we, besides the sense of our own safety, are striving to kindle beacon fires for their guidance & to devise effectual means for their deliverance from their distress & danger. It is curious to look upon the busy world — not "from the loopholes of retreat," but from its hot & hurrying midst — & see ~~their~~ its earnest idleness, its strenuous trifling. Crowds of men rushing together & lashing themselves into a foam of passion about which of two worthless men shall ~~become paramount to~~ live in the White House & about which of two systems of most egregious policy shall be forced upon the fewer by the more. And in all this heat & battle they mark not the under current of truth which is sapping all their castles in the air or mark it but to curse it. They know not the revolution in the midst of which they live. Prophets are amongst them & they know them not — or know them only as nuisances to thrust out & stone. But so it has ever been. ~~The~~ Nero and his court & people, & generations after them, when revelling on the spoils of nations, & stimulating their animal propensities with the contemplation of a subjugated world, with the bloody excitation of gladiatorial combats & the indulgence of all their lusts, little thought that a movement was commenced & going on in their midst, which was to overthrow the great system of idolatry on which the Empire rested & to change the whole face of the world's affairs. But enough of this. The conclusion which I wish you to draw from it is that you will resolve to extend your sisterly regards towards me so far as to keep me informed of what is done & said in your happy mansion. Among you all I think it would not be hard for ~~the~~ some of you to write something every day of your whereabout & your whatabout, & when the sheet is as full as woman knows how to fill it, then to send it to me by mail — until I have arranged some other communication. And the oftener they come the better. It seems to me something presumptuous, when I know your multitudinous correspondences & engagements, to make such a request — but my need is great & my consideration for you I fear yields to my necessities. Besides, if you do not help to keep me straight you do not know but I may grow desperate & take to bad courses. What would be your emotions should you hear of me as leading a Concert for the Conversion of the world — or as a Deacon in Dr. Burgess Church! —

I went yesterday to see Mr. Pennimans place & to enquire about the terms on which it can be bought — though I cannot but feel that your coming here would be too happy an event to be ever realized. It is a most enchanting spot. The house is exceedingly well built, I should judge from what I hear & saw. It has handsome drawing rooms, library, bathing room furnace, & all modern conveniences — four handsome chambers on the 2d floor & a finished attic which can at a small expense be made into four more. It stands in the midst of a group of noble old elms — aboriginals I doubt not — such trees as are seldom seen anywhere. The river winds round the grounds in a most graceful & picturesque manner. The well water is delicious & brought into the kitchen — it is soft & washes well. It is proved by the experience of two hundred years to be an eminently healthy place. It has been inhabited from the first settlement of the town — having been used in early times as a stockade. Mr. P. denies any superfluity of mosquitoes. The only objection that I can see to it as a permanent residence is that it is nearly half a mile from the high road & about a mile from the R. R. Depot. It is approached, however, by a good private road through young woods, which shelter it from the wind. Penniman says that it was not blocked up by the drifting snows of last winter & that an old man who lives near me & was born in the place says that it never was seriously blocked up — owing to the protection of the woods. There are ~~many~~ several hundred young fruit & ornamental trees in nurseries & otherwise which will be sold standing if the ground on which they grow be bought. The stables are excellent. There is an excellently contrived poultry yard & a small rabbit warren. I do not like to say too much about the place lest you should be disappointed in it — but I have seldom seen a place that pleased me more or was more susceptible of improvement by a good taste in planting &c while it is excellent as it is. Penniman asks for the house & a domain of about ten or twelve acres $8.000. I do not doubt that he has laid out more money than this on the house & this part of the estate — but at the same time I do not imagine that he expects to get this price for it. If judiciously managed by some experienced man in such matters I doubt not it might be had for $6.000 — very possibly for less. I hope that you will let your imagination dwell upon the advantages of such a residence & reverse the telescope when you look at the disadvantages. I will promise you one daily visitor at least. Anne could keep school in the village & Caroline could come over every night in about the same time & for about the same expense that she goes to town. I pray you ponder & perpend. Give my love to your husband & sisters not forgetting Lizzy & the baby & believe me your affectionate, though tedious, friend

Edmund Quincy.

P.S. Penniman will [illegible] purchaser. The 10 or 12 acres I mentioned as it would be conveniently divided there & that I might get at a price. The farmhouse occupied by the man who hires the rest of the farm is at a convenient distance — not too near — for assistance in case of need & for supplies & is a pretty object in the landscape. E. Q.

E. Quincy April 26
1840.
Riverdale at Dedham
Peace & righteousness
difference between news
& gossip E. Q. – E. Q.

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Single & paid.

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Maria W. Chapman.
Care of H. G. Chapman.
Boston.
Ms.

No 9